

Story 1140 (1974 Tape 11

Narrator: Hasan Erol

Location: Sekeli village, Yerköy
kaza, Yozgat Province

Date: August 7, 1974

Okra Discovered

A villager moved into the city of Yozgat. One day when he was in a grocery store, he saw a man there buying 250 grams of okra. When that customer left with his okra, the villager said to the shopkeeper, "Give me a kilo of okra."

"Oh, that would be too much," the shopkeeper said.

"Haven't you put this out here in order to sell it? Give me a kilo," the villager insisted. In that time, when our money had more value than it does now, he gave the grocer 50 Turkish liras and received as change 35 liras. "Didn't you overcharge me?" asked the villager.

"No. Okra costs 15 liras a kilo.

When he reached home the villager gave the package of okra to his wife. "What is this?" she asked him.

"It is something to eat

"What is it called?" she asked.

"Okra."

"I don't know how to cook it.

The villager thought for a minute, and then he said, "I know how we can find out. You pretend that you are sick.

Story 1140

I'll unroll your bed, and you will lie on it. Then I shall go and call my brother's wife." He unrolled the bed, placed his wife on it, and covered her with two quilts. "Just lie there without moving but pay close attention to how she cooks the okra."

He then went and got his sister-in-law to cook the meal, saying that his wife was sick in bed. When the sister-in-law arrived at his house, she asked, "Where is the meat to cook with it?"

The clever villager said, "Well, I bought it, but I must have forgotten and left it at the store. I'll go and get it right away." Of course, he had not known that okra is cooked with meat, but he went at once and bought some meat and a lemon.

As the sister-in-law was cooking the okra, she asked, "What happened to your wife? She seemed to be all right when I saw her earlier today.

"Yes, but she became ill quite suddenly."¹

¹ This is one of the seemingly innumerable anecdotes about the adjustments of rustics to urban life. In many the peasant is embarrassed by his ignorance of city ways and advanced technology, often in slapstick or pratfall fashion. The protagonist here is sufficiently wary and perceptive to elude humiliation.